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# 02/02/2000 - EIU Retention Efforts Successful

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February 2, 2000

For Immediate Release:

EIU RETENTION EFFORTS SUCCESSFUL

CHARLESTON -- Eastern Illinois University's efforts to provide students with a smooth transition from high school to college are working.

The percentage of first-time freshmen entering Eastern last fall and returning for the spring semester is 92.95 percent compared to 92.74 percent last year, according to tenth-day spring enrollment reports. Eastern also continues to have a high freshmen-to-sophomore retention rate -- 81 percent compared to about 50 percent nationally.

"This most recent retention data says a lot for Eastern's commitment to student success," said EIU Vice President for Student Affairs Lou Hencken. "The first year of college can be the most difficult. Eastern offers very strong academic advising and other student support services in a nurturing environment. Our students repeatedly say that our faculty and staff care about them as individuals and make them feel they

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belong at Eastern. This is why most of our students chose to continue their education at Eastern."

The total number of students enrolled this spring is 10,251 compared to 10,750 last spring. Hencken noted that about 900 students graduated this past December (the largest graduating class in the history of the university) and another large graduating class is expected this spring which will continue to impact enrollment trends. He added that Eastern's enrollment has remained consistent over the years which helps ensure Eastern's reputation for small classes and one-on-one attention from faculty.

This semester's total includes 1,650 freshmen, 1,817 sophomores, 2,290 juniors, 3,141 seniors and 1,353 graduate students. Of the total, 8,522 are full-time and 1,729, part-time. Females number 6,050 and males, 4,201.

The number of minority students enrolled this spring jumped nearly a full percentage point from 7.5 percent or 809 last spring to 8.4 percent or 854 this spring. The number of international students also increased from 124 last spring to 146 this spring.

In addition to on-campus classes, Eastern is offering off-campus classes at more than 10 sites this spring. William C. Hine, dean of the School of Adult and Continuing Education, said his office is continuing to add off-campus classes to meet increased demand and to enhance accessibility to EIU classes throughout the region.